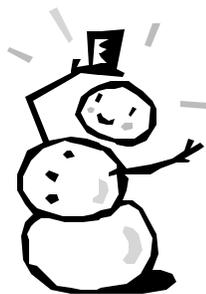


THE ALLIANCE

A Maricopa County Environmental Health Publication

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Darcy Brondt, R.S.



Inside this issue:

Date-marking of Ready-to-Eat Potentially Hazardous Foods	2
Foodborne Illness and Catering	3
Attention All Certified Food Service Managers	4
Special Event Permits	4
Requirements for Proper Installation of Icemaker/Dispensers at Golf Courses or Other Outside Facilities	5
Consumer Advisory Guidelines	6
Our Foodborne Illness Program	7
Tips for Improving Security in Food Facilities	8



From the Desk of David Ludwig

MPH, R.S., Maricopa County Environmental Health Division Manager

I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year, may 2003 bring prosperity to each and every one of you. In looking back on 2002, both industry and regulatory were challenged with the adoption of a new County Food Code and a new inspection system. The inspection system is based on critical violations, noting when they are being properly controlled and when they are not. On any given week last year, our Department inspected 750 food establishments, of those, 125 had NO violations and another 125 had NO critical violations! Meaning, one-third of all the establishments exhibited little or no risk of foodborne illness at the time we made our inspection. NOT BAD!!! But what about the other two-thirds?

To meet the charge from the public, legislature, and media, the Department is proposing to implement a new Food Service Inspection Scoring System. This system will utilize the inspection and violation tables currently used by our inspectors. Violation point values will be based on the Center for Disease Control (CDC) risk factors. These factors have been weighted between five and 20 points for critical violations and one to three points for non-critical. A perfect score is zero, where the worst scoring establishment, based on last year's inspections, was 174.

Examples of weighted items under the new system:

20 Points –

- Raw animal foods not cooked to proper temperature.
- Food not cooled within allotted time span.
- Ill persons working. Bare hand contact.

15 Points –

- Improper hot and cold holding.
- Receiving foods at improper temperature.
- Usage of non-pasteurized eggs in highly susceptible populations.

10 Points –

- Improper reheating, re-service, improper protection and foods from an unapproved source, etc.

5 points—

- All other critical items will be weighted .

1-3 Points —

- Non-critical items

Following the development of this system, our Department populated the 2002 data with these draft weighted values and scored the inspections. By utilizing these scores and the categories already established, we are able to clearly show how an establishment sizes up compared to similar facilities. For the first time, this tool allows the consumer to compare pre-packaged grocery stores to themselves and a full service restaurant to other full service

facilities. A percentile ranking, reflecting the mean score (50th percentile), will allow for everyone to see how well each of the inspected facilities rank.

Using the inspection data collected during 43,000 comprehensive inspections and the category grouping of 2002, we can establish a recognition system. We are recommending that the top 25% in all groups be provided a GOLD AWARD CERTIFICATE and a SILVER AWARD be provided to establishments scoring between 25% and 74%. The certificate will then be displayed by the establishment and the type of certificate will be based on the last comprehensive inspection conducted.

Because percentiles will change after each and every inspection, the Department will establish a yearly goal for each of the categories allowing the establishments to shoot to improve their scores. Improved scores will result in fewer critical violations and hopefully fewer foodborne illness outbreaks.

It is the Department's intention to have this new scoring system operational during the first quarter of 2003. We have conducted workshops with industry groups and have their support at this time. We welcome your comments regarding this AWARD-based scoring system to recognize the best performers in every food permit category.

Here's to a rewarding 2003!



Date-marking of Ready-to-Eat Potentially Hazardous Foods

By Timothy Hurst, R.S., Training and Development Coordinator

Date marking of ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods has been one of the most commonly marked violations. Before we discuss this new date marking and discarding requirement, let's define what a ready-to-eat and potentially hazardous food is.

A **ready-to-eat food**, according to the Maricopa County Environmental Health Code, is a food that is in an edible condition. Some examples of ready-to-eat foods are raw washed cut fruits and vegetables, whole raw fruits and vegetables ready for consumer consumption.

A **potentially hazardous food** is a food that requires temperature control to prevent hazardous pathogenic bacterial growth. Examples are foods from an animal origin, plant foods that are heat-treated or consist of raw seed sprouts and cut melons.

Foods with a water activity of 0.85 aw or less, a pH of 4.6 or less, in unopened commercial hermetically sealed containers or any foods that do not support growth of pathogenic organisms are not considered to be potentially hazardous.

Why does the new code require date marking? Date marking is required to control the growth of some very hazardous food-borne bacteria, such as *Listeria monocytogenes* that can grow at temperatures below 45°F. *Listeria monocytogenes* causes an estimated 2,500 illnesses and 500 deaths annually in the United States alone. It has been known to cause miscarriages and fetal deaths

in pregnant women and severe illnesses in the highly-susceptible population.

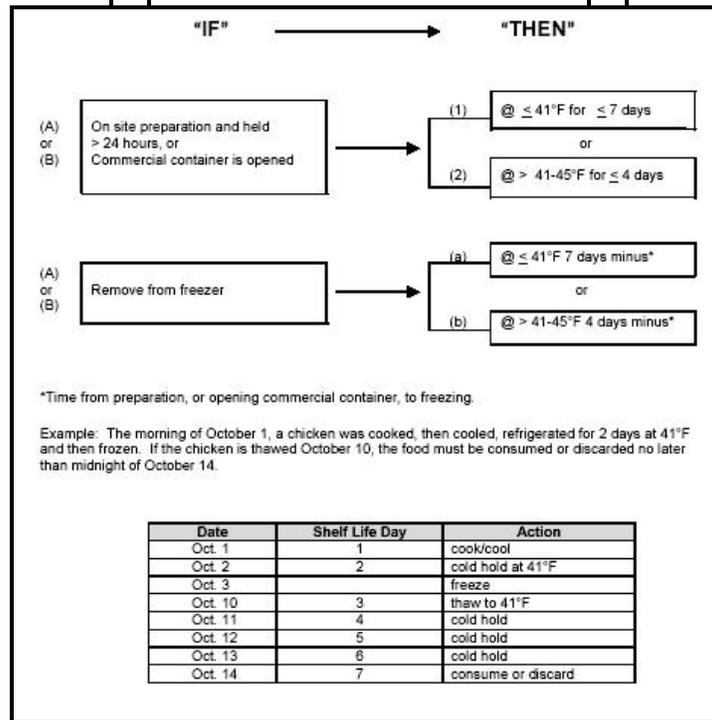
Date marking is required for ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods not used within 24 hours from an opened commercial container or prepared at the establishment. Proper date marking is ≤ 4 days if held at 41-45°F (5°-7°C) or ≤ 7 days if held at ≤41°F (≤5°C). The discard date must be marked on the container, counting the day it was

Ready-to-eat potentially hazardous foods can be frozen to stop the clock. The food product must, however, be used within 24 hours after being thawed or marked at the time of freezing, as to the number of days already held under refrigeration and, upon removing from the freezer, the new date code is 7 or 4 days minus the time before freezing (see the chart below). Another point to remember is that, when combining various potentially

hazardous ready-to-eat foods, the food must be discarded by the earlier date marked on the container.

This date marking requirement does not apply to whole, unsliced portions of a cured or processed meat product with the original casing maintained on the remaining portions, such as bologna, salami, or other sausage in a cellulose casing that do not have a label that states to "keep refrigerated." It also does not apply to certain hard and semi-soft cheeses and bulk milk dispensers.

Keep in mind the purpose of this is to discard the food no later than the expiration date. Please contact your individual inspector if you have any questions about this important item.



opened or prepared as day one. The operator may use another system as long as it meets the intent of the regulation. Food must be discarded by this date. The date that is marked on the container must also not exceed the manufacturer's use-by-date, unless it is frozen.

References:

- Maricopa County Environmental Health Code Chapter 8 Sections 1 and 2 (Code Reference 3-501.17 & 3-501.18).
- United States Department of Health and Human Services, [HHS and USDA release Listeria risk assessment and Listeria action plan](#), c2001.



Foodborne Illness and Catering

By Aimee Upton, R.S., Special Programs Manager



Catering and other off-site food service activities have many additional

risks that ordinary food service operations do not face. To protect your operation, there are some simple concepts that you should be aware of in order to help protect your business from foodborne illness. To begin, the food is being transported to various locations. At these locations, is water provided for proper handwashing and dishwashing? Is electricity available to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold?

Back in 1999, Maricopa County Environmental Services did a study on the risk factors associated with off-site food service. During this study, it was found that the most common inspection violations noted in the field were: 1) Temperatures – improper cooking, hot and cold holding, 2) Handwashing – both lack of handwashing facilities and poor personal hygiene, 3) Food Transport – lack of proper equipment to maintain food temperatures while in transport, 4) Sanitizer – complete lack of sanitizers at event sites, and 5) Exposure – food open and exposed

to contamination. Unfortunately, these common violations are what the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recognize as the most common causes of foodborne illness.

To avoid these common violations, make efforts to avoid these situations by being prepared. Simple, easy steps can help eliminate many of these issues before they happen. For example, if you are going to a site that is lacking water or you are unsure of the facilities, take a temporary handwashing station. A five gallon insulated container with a spigot, soap, paper towels and a catch container can provide an instant handwashing station. Also, train your staff to use the handwash station. Simply providing it may not be enough to ensure that employee hands are getting washed.



Another easy step to avoid foodborne illness is to take temperatures. Use the thermometer to monitor the cooking and holding temperatures of food. If you find the food has gone over 41F or has fallen below 130F and has been out for more than two hours, throw it out. Also, monitor when food is put out for service, don't estimate. Although food costs are

important to your business, keeping your customers happy and avoiding illness will help to bring in more customers down the line. After all, word of mouth is important in your business.

Finally, prepare the foods in the kitchen of your establishment and serve at the event site. Catering and off-site food service is not intended to be a full-service restaurant in someone's backyard. There is absolutely no reason why your staff should be chopping lettuce, fruits, stuffing mushrooms, making hamburger patties or doing other preparation of any food under an oak tree. Eliminating the need to handle the food extensively at the event site does help to reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Off-site food service can be difficult. However, with some planning and attention to detail, you will be able to reduce the risk of foodborne illness associated with your business. Ensure handwashing is available and food temperatures are correct. Take steps to limit the amount of handling that a food needs at the event site. With an eye on these issues, your events will be a success and customers will tell their friends what a great operation you run.



Attention All Certified Food Service Managers

By Shelley Stewart, R.S., Food Service Worker Coordinator

As the expiration date of your Certified Manager card approaches you will need to make plans on how to renew it. Please be advised that our rules have changed since your card was first issued. **Read this notice carefully to ensure that you do not re-train or re-test unnecessarily.**



If your Certified Manager card (photo ID) bears a yellow county emblem, it was issued for a three-year term. Cards are now issued for a five-year term, and bear a blue county emblem. Managers who have three-year cards **may be able** to qualify for an extended Manager card if their certifying credentials (i.e. the documents that were presented to us in order to obtain the photo ID

card) are still **less than five years old.**

If your credentials are **older** than five years you will not be able to gain an extension. You must retest via an accredited testing agency in order to renew your Certified Manager card. A current list of accredited testing agencies is available at www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/envhlth/fdwkr/mci.asp or by calling 602-506-6970, option 2. Just as you did the first time, you will have to present the new credentials at one of our offices to obtain a new card, and the fee will be \$12. The term of your new card will be five years.

If your credentials are still less

than five years old at the time your Certified Manager card is due to expire, you can defer re-testing for up to two years by obtaining an extended card. To obtain one of these you must bring us the same credentials you brought us the first time, **as well as your current Certified Manager card.** You must bring us originals; photocopies are not accepted. The fee for an extended card is \$3.

The term of the extended card will be for whatever time you have left on your credentials. So those of you whose credentials are nearing the five-year mark would be better advised to re-certify and present us new credentials for a full five-year card.

If you have any questions about how to renew your card, please feel free to call me at 602-506-6973.

Special Event Permits

By Bryan Hare, R.S., Special Events Coordinator

On certain occasions throughout the year, your restaurant may choose to participate in special events. In order to conduct off-premise food service, restaurants are required to obtain a temporary food establishment permit or a catering permit, depending on the type of special event that is occurring.

Temporary food establishment permits are issued for public events such as, rodeos, fairs or exhibitions that last fourteen consecutive days or less, at the same location, same permittee, and same event. At the termination of the event, the temporary food establishment is removed from the premises.

The temporary food establishment application can be obtained from the Special Events Program located at 1001 N. Central Ave. or online at <http://www.maricopa.gov/envsvc/ENVHLTH/SPPRGM/spcevent>.

asp, along with the special event guideline manual, which details how to operate at special events. Once your temporary food establishment application is received and reviewed, an approval notice and letter are mailed to the applicant. The fee for a temporary food establishment permit is \$60.00 when application and payment are received seven days before the event, and \$80.00 anytime after the deadline.

A catering permit is an annual permit that food establishments must qualify for to do off-premise food service. A food caterer is defined by the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department as "*any establishment in which the process of preparing food products or food is carried on at one premise for the service and consumption at another off-site location for a temporary event or other occasion.*" For events such as weddings or other private functions that are not open to the public, establishments

are required to have a catering permit to do off-premise food service. The district inspectors issue catering permits if your establishment can qualify, and not the Special Events Program. Caterers should always submit a temporary food establishment application when participating at special events, but no permit fee is required as long as a valid copy of the catering permit is onsite at all times at the special event.

Special events can be fun and beneficial to establishments, but there are special event guidelines and catering guidelines that must be followed to be in compliance with the Maricopa County Environmental Health Code.

Please contact Bryan Hare, Special Events Coordinator, at 602-506-6978 for more information.



Requirements for Proper Installation of Icemaker/Dispensers At Golf Courses or at other Outside Facilities

By Dan Queen, R.S., Plan Review Program Manager



Many golf courses have shown an interest in installing icemakers and/or ice dispensers in outdoor locations in lieu of providing sanitized water containers or bottled water. These icemaker/dispensing units are classified as vending machines and must meet all of the requirements of the Maricopa County Health Code, Chapter 8, Section 4 (vending machines). The following requirements must be taken into consideration prior to installing an icemaker/dispenser outside.

Proper Approvals

- Any machine installed must be American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA) approved. When a machine meets the NAMA requirements a "Letter of Compliance" is issued identifying the machine by manufacture, model and the date the certification was first issued. Manufacturers are then authorized to display the "NAMA Listed" service mark on its listed machines. The sticker is placed in the upper left-hand corner on the front of the machine.

Location and Protection of Machine

- The floor area upon which the vending machine is located shall be smooth and easily cleanable. (Sealed concrete or tile only)
- The machine must be located in an alcove protected by three sides and a waterproof roof, or have a waterproof roof that protrudes 4 feet from the edge of each side of the machine. The height of the roof shall be between 8-10 feet in

height. An increase in height will require an increase in the protrusion to insure adequate overhead protection.

- The machine must be protected from sprinkler water.

Proper Drainage of Machines

- An air-cooled machine may be drained to a dry well or a floor sink while water-cooled machines must be drained to a floor sink that is properly connected to an approved sewer system.
- The dry well for an air-cooled machine must be of adequate depth and size to keep water from ponding.

Responsible Party to Oversee Operation of the Machine

- The instruction manual must be available on the premises.
- The machine must be washed and sanitized as per instructions in the manual. Due to the machine being located outside, more frequent washing and sanitizing will be required.
- The permit holder shall periodically take samples from each vending machine at least once every 12 months. The samples shall be provided to a laboratory certified by the State of Arizona for analysis to detect coliform bacteria. If laboratory results are unsatisfactory, the machine shall be taken out of service until such time as satisfactory samples are obtained (Chapter 8, Section 4, Regulation 27b). Records of the results of laboratory samples shall be maintained for two years by the permit holder and shall be made available to the Department of Environmental Services upon request.

Connected to an Approved Water System

- Water supplied to a vending machine shall be from an approved source. Water dispensed from water vending machines shall meet or exceed Federal and State Drinking Water Standards (Chapter 8, Section 4, Regulation 27a).
- All connections, fittings and back-flow devices shall be installed in accordance with applicable plumbing regulations and codes.

Proper Permits and Inspection

- Each icemaker/dispenser will be required to be inspected upon installation and during routine inspections thereafter.
- If an eating and drinking permit is held by the golf course and the eating and drinking staff is responsible for the daily cleaning and servicing of the machine, no further permit will be required.
- If the eating and drinking staff is not responsible for the daily cleaning and servicing of the machine and/or no eating and drinking permit exists for the golf course, a vending machine permit will be required.

Proper Dispensing of Single-Service Containers

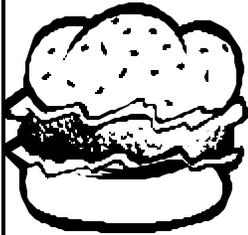
- All single-service containers shall be kept in sanitary packages and stored in a clean dry location until used (Chapter 8, Section 4, Regulation 7). When stored in a dispenser they shall be protected from manual contact, dust, insects, rodents, and other contamination.

For more information contact Dan Queen, Plan Review Manager at 602-506-6986.



Consumer Advisory Guidance

By Timothy Hurst, R.S., Training and Development Coordinator



Consumer advisories are required when an animal food such as beef, eggs, fish, lamb, milk, pork,

poultry, or shellfish is served as ready-to-eat in a raw, undercooked or not otherwise processed form to eliminate pathogens. It is also required for raw ingredients in ready-to-eat food items.

This advisory requirement has the following two components: the **disclosure**, or the item(s) that is ordered raw or undercooked or items that contain an ingredient that is raw or undercooked, and the **reminder**, that eating animal foods in a raw or undercooked form can pose a health risk to the consumer.

Disclosure must:

- be on the *menu* or, in the absence of a *menu*, be presented in writing to consumers
- identify the food items that require **disclosure**
- specify that those food items are, or contain, raw or undercooked animal-derived foods.

Methods of Compliance:

1. **Disclosure** by description: Items are described, such as:
 - Oysters on the half-shell (raw oysters)
 - Raw-egg Caesar salad
 - Hamburgers cooked to order

2. **Disclosure** by asterisking the food items to a footnote that states, depending on the situation, that the items:

- "Are served raw or undercooked"
- *Contain (or may contain) raw or undercooked ingredients.*"

3. When a menu is used:

- Modify the *menu* through the use of permanent adhesive stickers
- Reprint the menu
- Present a separate written *disclosure* notice to the consumer in conjunction with the menu;

4. In the absence of a menu:

- Present a written **disclosure** notice to consumers.

Reminder:

If either of the two **reminder** statements containing the actual advisory information is used, the statement must be in conjunction with the **disclosure** and placed according to one of the following:

- at least once on any page of the menu (preferably the first or last page) and located within the menu so that the consumer may easily find it
- on a placard, table tent, or by other written means.

Methods of Compliance:

1. Use one of two reminder statements:
 - Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.

- Consuming raw or undercooked meats, poultry, seafood, shellfish, or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness especially if you have certain medical conditions.

Remember the consumer advisory must be specific as to the food that is served in this form.

2. Use a consumer advisory brochure.

- Regarding the safety of these items, written information is available upon request.
- FDA Model Brochure text can be found at <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fc99guid.html>.

The consumer advisory can be displayed in several ways, including:

Placard- placed in a conspicuous spot in the establishment for consumers to view prior to ordering.

Table-Tent- placed on each table for consumers to view prior to ordering.

Menu- asterisked to the food item or by the food item.

Source:

- Implementation Guidance for the Consumer Advisory Provision of the FDA Food Code (<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/fc99guid.html>).
- Maricopa County Environmental Health Code, Chapter Eight, Section 2, § 3-603.11.



Our Foodborne Illness Program

By Mike Shafer, R.S., Foodborne Illness Coordinator



My name is Mike Shafer and currently I am the Foodborne Illness Program Coordinator for the Maricopa County Environmental Services Department. I would like to offer some information about how

Maricopa County responds to foodborne illness complaints, the most common foodborne diseases, and what you can do to prevent foodborne disease in your facility.

To begin, this program is responsible for initiating foodborne illness investigations in response to citizens of Maricopa County that allege food poisoning against a food establishment. The investigation typically consists of contacting the complainant, conducting a foodborne illness interview, and then performing a foodborne illness inspection of the suspect facility (if the complaint is determined to be valid). From December 2001 to December 2002, our Department received over 1,200 food poisoning complaints with over 1,300 ill persons. In the United States, foodborne disease causes an estimated 76 million illnesses, with 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,200 deaths every year.

According to the Center for Disease Control, there are more than 250 known foodborne diseases. Most of these diseases are infections caused by a variety of bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can be foodborne.

Other diseases are poisonings caused by harmful toxins or chemicals that have contaminated the food. These different diseases have many different symptoms, so there is no one "syndrome" that is foodborne illness. Typically, when the microbe or toxin enters the body through the gastrointestinal tract, it causes the first symptoms of nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhea. Foodborne illness can occur anywhere from a few minutes to a few weeks after the microbe or toxin enters the human body.

The following are some common foodborne diseases:

1. *Campylobacter*- this is the most common cause of diarrhea and is a bacterium that causes fever, diarrhea, and abdominal cramps within 2 to 10 days. These bacteria live in the intestines of healthy birds, and most raw poultry meat has *Campylobacter* on it. Eating undercooked chicken or other food that has been contaminated with juices dripping from raw chicken is the most frequent source of this infection.
2. *Salmonella*- is a bacterium that is widespread in the intestines of birds, reptiles and mammals. It can spread to humans via raw or undercooked eggs, undercooked poultry meat, dairy products, seafood, and fruits and vegetables. The illness it causes, *salmonellosis*, typically includes fever, diarrhea and abdominal cramps and occurs within 5 hours to 5 days.
3. *Staphylococcus aureus*- this bacterium produces a toxin that causes vomiting within 1 to 8 hours of ingestion. This toxin,

typically the result of improper cooling or bare hand contact, cannot be cooked out. Foods such as cooked meats, salads, bakery products and dairy products are often implicated in this type of illness.

4. *E. Coli* O157:H7- this is a bacterial pathogen that is found in cattle and other similar animals. Humans become ill after consumption of food or water that has been contaminated with small amounts of cow feces. The bacterium produces a deadly toxin that causes severe and bloody diarrhea, abdominal pains, nausea and vomiting within 3 to 9 days of consumption. Sources of this illness include meats, especially raw or undercooked hamburger, produce and raw milk.

The major factors that contribute to foodborne illness are things such as improper cooling, improper hot and cold holding, inadequate re-heating, cross-contamination of raw and cooked foods, ill employees, poor employee hygiene, and lack of proper cleaning of equipment and utensils. A facility that has controls in place to prevent these types of mistakes can dramatically lower the risk of any foodborne illness occurring at their facility.

References:

- Benenson, Abram S., 1995, Control of Communicable Disease Manual, Sixteenth Edition.
- Foodborne Illness: Ten Least Wanted Foodborne Pathogens, WWW.fightbac.org
- Foodborne Infections, www.cdc.gov/ncidod

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Tips for Improving Security in Food Facilities

By Ralph Jones, R.S., Institutional Food Program Lead Specialist

- Assign responsibility for security to a qualified person(s).
- Encourage staff to be alert to any signs of tampering of product or equipment.
- Immediately investigate suspicious activity and alert local law enforcement about all suspected criminal activity.
- Provide appropriate level of supervision to all employees, including cleaning and maintenance staff, contract workers, data entry and computer support staff, and especially new employees.
- Implement procedures to ensure the security of incoming shipments of food.
- Restrict entry to food handling and storage areas. Make sure there is a valid reason for visit before providing access to the facility. Apply these security procedures to everyone, including contractors, supplier representatives, truck drivers, third-party auditors, couriers, customers, regulators, reporters, etc.

Source: <http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/sec-ltr.html>

Please send your suggestions, comments and mailing list requests to Darcy Brondt,
Special Projects Coordinator, at dbrondt@mail.maricopa.gov or call 602-506-6954.